

Date: October 14, 2009

To: AHS Physician Leadership – Senior Physician Executive
AHS Senior Medical Officer of Health and Medical Officers of Health
AHS Pandemic Steering Committee and Working Group Chairs
Dr. Douglas Perry, Alberta Health and Wellness
Dr. Andre Courriveau, Alberta Health and Wellness
Dr. Marie Louie, Provincial Lab Services (ProvLab)

CC: Dr. William Hnydyk, Alberta Medical Association
Mr. Michael Gormley, Alberta Medical Association
Dr. Trevor Theman, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta

From: Dr. Rollie Nichol, Associate Senior Physician Executive

RE: **AHS Communication with Alberta’s Physicians regarding H1N1 (2009) Pandemic**

Alberta Health Services (AHS) now has the capacity to reach 90%+ of Alberta physicians, targeted Zone physicians, or smaller physician groups (e.g. by specialty) within urban centers. Having the means to access physicians quickly and efficiently through fax and email supports the H1N1 pandemic planning process and meets the ongoing operational needs of AHS.

Our aim is to provide physicians with information essential to their practice and their patients. This will enable optimal response from Alberta’s physicians during a pandemic and enhance the linkage between physicians and AHS operations and programs. Communication to physicians must be coordinated and aligned with communication to the public and AHS employees.

1. Accessing the AHS Physician Communication System

If you require access to the AHS physician communication system to Alberta physicians regarding H1N1 issues, please complete the attached *H1N1 Request for Physician Communication Form* with your one-page communication content and email it to physician.info@albertahealthservices.ca. If the message is **Urgent** and **After Hours** (between 17:00 – 08:00, and on weekends and holidays), please also telephone the on-call physician communication pager at 403 212 8223 pager #07213 to ensure a timely response.

- **Urgent** communication is time-sensitive information that should be seen by the physician within 24 hours.
- Non-urgent communication (**For Notification** and **For Information**) may take over 24 hours to transmit, and may be distributed through the Zones in a form other than fax or email.

To expedite the physician communication process, the following stakeholders have been given “pre-approval” to access the AHS physician communication system:

- The Senior Physician Executive, Associate Senior Physician Executives and other direct reports, and Zone Medical Directors

- H1N1 Coordination Centre, the Pandemic Planning Steering Committee, the Leads for any of the Pandemic Planning Steering Committee Working Groups
- The Senior Medical Officer of Health and Medical Officers of Health
- Provincial Lab Services (ProvLab)
- The Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH)
- Alberta Health and Wellness (AHW)

Request from internal or external groups that do not have “pre-approval” will be reviewed by Dr. Rollie Nichol or a designate. This office will maintain a log of all H1N1 physician communication and all content will be posted on the AHS H1N1 website for Health Professionals <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/660.asp>.

2. Urgent H1N1 Communication to Physicians

H1N1 communication that is classified as **Urgent** and/or communication targeting **all physicians in Alberta** require the authorization of the H1N1 Coordination Centre, the AHS Senior Physician Executive or the Senior Medical Officer of Health (see the attached *Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 AHS Physician Spokesperson Guidelines*). This excludes communication approved by Alberta Health and Wellness, which will be sent out directly and does not require the above vetting process.

The initial and current mode for transmitting **Urgent** information to all physicians regarding H1N1 is by fax. **The content of messages will be limited to one page.** We are setting up a system to send transmissions by email, and this should be available in the next few weeks.

3. H1N1 Communications to Physicians within a Zone

If your message is targeted to physicians within a particular zone and is not *After Hours*, you may either contact the Medical Affairs team within that zone or send the request to physician.info@albertahealthservices.ca and the central team will ensure that any communications targeted to physicians within a zone are transmitted.

4. Partnerships to support effective H1N1 Physician Communication

The Alberta Medical Association (AMA) and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) have their own mechanisms for contacting their physician members. AHS, AMA and CPSA are committed to collaborate wherever possible to ensure effective communication with Alberta physicians regarding H1N1.

More information on the principles of H1N1 physician communication is outlined in *Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 AHS Physician Spokesperson Guidelines*, which is attached to this memo or available by emailing physician.info@albertahealthservices.ca.